



Life After Death

A Mother's Story

Jeany Pavett

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Strategic Book Group

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To my darling daughter, Gabrielle Jane,

You touched the hearts of many during your lifetime, most of all mine. This book is dedicated to you with all my love. You are gone but not forgotten. I carry you always in my heart.

For my wonderful husband, Donald, you have stood by me through thick and thin. How can I ever thank you? You have always been content to give me all the space and time I needed on my journey through life and to write this book. You have always been there supporting me in the background. You may think that everything you have done has gone unnoticed, but I hold it all in my heart and mind. The truth is – without you I would be nothing. You are my hero, the ‘wind beneath my wings’ and with your support I can fly, soaring on the wings of the eagle.

Through everything, you have stood by me, made me see the truth, brought so much joy into my life and turned all the wrongs to rights. You made my dreams all come true with the love that I found in you; for which I will always be thankful. You always hold me up and never let me fall; you have seen me through everything.

With you by my side I have wings to fly, and I feel as though I could reach the sky with your hand in mine. Each time I have lost my faith; you encouraged me and told me that nothing was out of my reach. With you I stand tall and having your love means that I have everything I need. I am so grateful for each and every day you have given me these past decades. The truth is that I have been blessed because of your love. You’re the light in the dark, my inspiration and through all the lies of my life, you are the truth. I thank God that He brought us together; my world is a better place because of you. During all those times of my weakness you were my strength and when I couldn’t find the words to speak, you were my voice. When I couldn’t see the way anymore you, were my eyes to guide me.

Donald, I want to thank you for lifting me up, for giving me faith and believing in me. I'm everything I am because of your love for me. Thank you isn't enough, Donald, I love you, always have, always will.

All my love,

Jeany

xXx

For my beautiful and precious daughters, Megan & Elizabeth; you are my world and my life.

To the Special People over the years who have given me support and friendship to help me live.

To everyone who encouraged me to write this book; believed enough to give me the money I needed to get started, and prayed for me in this venture.

Thanks Peter for reading this book so many times and in offering encouragement and advice.

Mum – I love you more than you will ever know, thank you for being my Mum.

I thank God for you all. This is my story, the way I see it. The life I have lived.

Contents

I'm Pregnant!.....	1
The Stark Reality Learned.....	5
Labour Begins Early	7
Meet Gabrielle.....	15
A Childhood Dies	18
Abuse, Fear and Abandonment.....	21
Shut Down and Alone.....	31
Wrenched Apart	35
Together at Last!.....	43
“Leave Her Alone!”	51
Christmas in Hospital	54
Up's and Down's.....	57
Over-Ruled Again	62
A Special Time	68
The Last Days.....	77
The Worst Days of My Life	89
Learning to Live Again	96
Our Completed Family	100
Talking at Last!.....	104
Donald & I	107
The Truth Revealed	113
How Could I Ever Forgive?	121
Turning The Corner	126
Oh No, Not Again!	134

A Relationship Under Strain.....	143
Megan's Miracles	146
How was I Able to Cope?	148
A Moment of Thanks	155
Appendix A - My Letter To Gabrielle	159
Appendix B - Special Verses from The New International Version Of The Bible	161
Appendix C - A Word Given	163

Chapter 1

I'm Pregnant!

I felt quite strange and sort of all up in the air. I felt as though I was going to have appendicitis because I kept having a pain in my right side.

We had decided we would like to have a baby, but this was only the first month of 'trying' so I didn't dare dream that I could be pregnant.

I had terrible hunger pangs night and day, I felt I had to eat and I also felt as though my period was about to start. Donald was convinced that I was pregnant and kept talking to the 'baby'. He said he really had the feeling that he was going to be a daddy. I wanted to believe it, but tried to convince myself that I wasn't, so that I wouldn't be disappointed when my period did start. We had to wait until it was six weeks late before the doctor would do a test.

I became very emotional over the weekend, especially on the Sunday. I could not get the lid off the bottle of milk and when I did, my finger went through the lid and the milk splashed me and I almost cried about it. When I recounted the event to Donald – I did cry.

On the first of March I was in the kitchen preparing the tea when I heard a key turning in the lock and the front door burst open. Donald had just arrived home from work and he seemed very excited. "Look what I've got!" he waved a box in the air grinning – it was a home pregnancy test so that we didn't have to wait any longer than the morning for a result.

"But if I'm not pregnant, I'll be so upset; I don't think I can bear to do it."

"Well you supply the sample and I'll do the test!" Donald beamed.

Donald woke early; ushered me into the bathroom and fifteen minutes later swept me in his arms. "We're going to have a baby; we're going to have a baby!"

"Hold on, Donald, you didn't leave the test in the first compartment for ten minutes like the instruction said."

"Come on, Jeany, believe it, the line is there – clear as anything." Donald urged.

"Even so, I don't want to get too excited yet and be disappointed later." I replied.

"Okay, Jeany, we'll do the other test tomorrow morning to set your mind at rest if it will make you happier."

The next morning we did the second test and got another POSITIVE and I began to believe that I was pregnant, but we decided not to tell anyone until we had got the official doctors confirmation. We took a sample to the hospital then waited two or three days for the results to come back. I had wanted Donald to telephone for the result, but they said that it had to be me. The first time I telephoned it hadn't come back, but the second time it was there. Even though I knew that our tests were positive the 'official confirmation' bowled me over. I felt so excited and faint that the receptionist's voice faded away and I went into a sort of trance until I heard,

"Mrs Pavett, Mrs Pavett! Are you alright?"

"Yes, yes, I'm here. What do I do next?"

"We need to set a time for your first antenatal appointment; the clinic is on Tuesday's." The receptionist replied.

Appointment made, I telephoned the police station where Donald was on an early shift, to let him know. We were extremely happy. Our families were very excited too. This baby would be the first of a new generation on both sides.

I eagerly waited for the first trimester to pass so that we could begin to prepare for the baby's arrival. Naturally I worried about all the usual things that could go wrong and I was anxious for all the blood test results to come back; especially the one at sixteen weeks (AFP) to see if there was a chance of Spina bifida. When we found that it had come back with a raised level, it was cause for concern.

The Consultant I would be under had not yet started so I was in the care of the senior Obstetric Doctor filling in until the new one arrived. After my routine scan that everyone has at around sixteen weeks, we were told that we would have to see the Doctor in clinic the next day because the baby appeared to have a hernia.

When we arrived we were told that, in fact, the baby had an exomphalos, which meant that there was a hole in the abdominal wall and part of the gut was trapped outside. The Doctor told us that after the birth the baby would go to a London Hospital to have an operation to put it back inside. They were not concerned about the raised AFP level because after seeing the scan, the defect they found would explain the extra fluid – nature's way of protecting the baby. We were told that I would be regularly scanned to keep a close eye on the situation.

In June I had my first of my regular full structural scans which meant that every inch of the baby was looked at from head to toe by a Consultant Radiographer. Four weeks later I had the next one.

I was afraid in case the baby was in London for any length of time. What would I do with a baby in London and Donald at home? I felt torn already and nothing had happened yet. I was filled with panic and dread and that night needed to feel Donald's strong arms around me for comfort and support but he'd gone to work and wouldn't be home before two in the morning. I felt very isolated and afraid.

Donald had also fallen off the step-ladder in the baby's room and had hurt himself. How I wished he hadn't gone to work. I knew he would tell me not to worry until or if, we had cause to and that we should cross bridges as we came to them. I knew he was right, of course, but I still couldn't help it.

Not so long ago I had been thanking and praising God that our prayers had been answered and I had become pregnant very quickly unlike our parents who had taken some years to conceive and now I felt let down, confused. Why had this happened? What had I done? Why should my happiness be marred by a rare condition that no one had ever heard of? I prayed that it would not be a serious problem and that we would cope.

I remember the baby kicking me and wanting it to, but it felt eerie sometimes, knowing that there was another human being inside me. Once I actually felt its hand through my tummy. I could feel each finger; it must have had its hand spread out on the inside of my tummy pushing it upwards. It was wonderful. I loved this baby already with all my heart and I knew that my love could only grow stronger.

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